The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

VOL. VI., NO. 2. APRIL, 1898. ONE PENNY.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
1. Sonnet. Written in the Wye Valley. Horace G. Groser	17
2. Luxury. Sermon. By the Rev. Bernard J. Snell, M.A.	17
3. A Noble Utterance	21
4. Authentic Interviews. III. Dr. Priestley	23
5. To Spring. Poem. Fanny Forrester ...	26
6. "Two Opposing Tendencies"	27
7. Congregational Singing. II.	29
8. Seed Corn	31
9. The Children's Page	32

Sonnet.

WRITTEN IN THE WYE VALLEY.

There is no life in this wide world of men,
Howe'er self-governed, moveth quite alone;
We are not isolate, though before our ken
Stretch the wild wastes or city crowds unknown.
We say, "Self-wrought our course, self-built our throne!
A proud calm circles us, no things without
Trouble our springs of thought; but, all our own,
We move, not like weak spirits swayed about."

O blind to all those mighty influences
Feeding us from afar, undreamed of still!
Our crisis hour steals on us, fair, and these
Flood down and overflow the banks of Will.

So brims the quiet Wye beneath blue skies
When storms drench far Plynlimmon where her stream hath rise.
Symonds Yat. —*Horace G. Groser.*

Spring.

A laughing child she comes, in garb of green,
Her flowing tresses lifted on the wind;
Gaily she trips the bare hedgerows atween,
And as she lightly treads, she leaves behind
A wealth of beauty; all her wake is gay
With violets blue, and honeysuckle sweet,
The silver daisy, and the fragrant may;
And cowslips bloom where she did place her feet.

The thorny briar she kisses; forth there springs
A blushing rose. The frozen stream she frees;
It leaps away, and once again it sings
Through pastures green; while in the budding trees
The merry birds join in the roundelay;
And thus the Spring-Child passes on her way.

Edward Medland White.

Luxury.

A SERMON,

BY THE REV. BERNARD J. SNELL, M.A.

"Ye have lived delicately (*luxuriously*) on the earth, and taken your pleasure (*wantonly*); ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter."—ST. JAMES v., 5.

"Luxury" is a word of serious perplexity to many prosperous citizens. Is luxury to be reprehended or commended from the point of view of Economics and Ethics? Everything turns on the definition, and all the definitions are unsatisfactory. Define it as "ostentatious extravagance and wanton waste," and there are no terms too severe in censure. Define it as "everything beyond the necessaries of life," and you condemn civilization itself, which is absurd. If all superfluities are culpable luxuries, then by that showing we had best go back to acorns for food, and skins for clothes, and caves for dwellings; nothing more is needed to keep body and soul together.

Luxury is indeed one of those terms concerning which a man may say, "I know what it means *when you don't ask me.*" The word implies blame somewhere—Luxury. Well if that be so, we are justified in ruling out wants felt by a people in their upward progress to higher civilization, as distinguished from those wants artificially created and illegitimately satisfied. A civilized man has *more wants* than a barbarian.

Within measure, a scanty range of wants is a sure sign of inferiority; a certain level of culture creates wants. Though it would be fallacious to say in all cases that the more wants a man has, the higher level he has reached,—(*Est modus in rebus*), still in the first stages of human development, as a man's wants multiply, the more the man himself improves, grows and thrives; but after a certain stage of advance, a man is called upon to retrench his wants, to curb his desires, to train himself to do without things. Or, to quote Carlyle, to "decrease his denominator instead of increasing his numerator."

The steady age of civilized man is to multiply his comforts and pleasures. *That* tendency has stimulated the growth of industry and commerce. A society without the "superfluities" of civilization would soon be rotten with laziness. Those are precisely the things which make men work. Banish the power to have "superfluities" and civilized comforts, and you destroy the foundation of a free and independent life. Within limit, a man is not less free, but more free by the multiplication of his wants: he becomes more the master of the situation.

I do not think that the word "luxury" can be fairly applied to those comforts which protect us from annoyance and inconvenience—to those possessions which tend to the preservation of health and strength. Nor do I think that the word can be fairly applied to those lasting contributions to the enrichment of life for a great number; to that outlay which provides splendid buildings, libraries, statues, pictures, which are joys for generations. Wise and generous expenditure which refines and elevates, which gives dignity to the spender and is the means of spreading social happiness, is not in the same category as the outlay of thousands on a meal or a revel, when so much is squandered in an hour. I deplore that the cause of Art has been confounded with luxury; they are disparate altogether. Why? Because luxury is essentially selfish; Art is disinterested. Luxury aims at vulgar display; Art is the satisfaction of the divine sentiment of the beautiful. Luxury is barbaric through and through—it degrades; Art is the child of civilization and refines. Luxury is *not* the patron of Art; it has always proved fatal to Art. The most luxurious nations in history have been inartistic. When the comforts of life have become the dominant aim of society, Art has always fallen low.

The Greeks, the most artistic people who have ever existed, in the great age of Pericles were *not* a luxurious people. In the days when Athens spent two-thirds of her annual public revenue on public buildings and monuments, the Athenians were very simple and very homely in their habits. For a thousand years they wore the same pattern of clothes: they were beautiful clothes and healthy clothes, and they said, "Why change them?" They lived in very simple houses in the days when they built those temples and galleries which are the glory and despair of the world. They ate simply, they knew nothing of the vast series of courses which are the disgusting invention of modern times. Their houses were plainly and scantily furnished, in contrast to the old furniture shops which are called "drawing-rooms" at the present day. There is nothing in the world more charming and appropriate than the little terra-cotta statuettes of Tanagra, the material of which cost a halfpenny or less! And they are priceless now. It was in the days when Art gave place to luxury that the critic said to the sculptor, "Ah! you have loaded your Aphrodite with ornaments because you could not make her beautiful."

I am incapable of framing an exact definition of luxury, because the subject is so mobile that it eludes definition; luxury is *altogether relative.* What one age deems a luxury, another regards as a necessity. What one man regards as unpardonable extravagance, to another is justifiable expenditure. The rich man who was "clothed in purple and fine linen" was not a sinner because of that. The book lover thinks it wicked to spend money on horses; whilst the lover of horse-flesh marvels at the extravagance of the man who collects first editions. What *you* do not care for is always apt to be called "culpable, selfish luxury." Everyone considers as a superfluity what he does not habitually use.

Sir Walter Scott tells a story of two Highlanders who were preparing to pass a wintry night together on a moor: one rolled a snowball for a pillow; the other kicked it away as a blameworthy luxury. The men of a few centuries ago would have esteemed gas and glass, tea and coffee, chimneys and mirrors, baths and clean

linen, as disgraceful luxuries. If it were possible for one of our enterprising young journalists to interview an early Christian, I have no doubt that he would be found in favour of abolishing picture-galleries, theatres, all the adornments of life, in favour of sweeping away all the graces and comforts, all the amenities without which we should consider life intolerable. In the progress of civilization the luxuries of one age become the comforts of the next, and the necessities of the age following.

But though the definition is thus very difficult, so difficult indeed that the very difficulty of defining "luxury" is itself a very serious warning to us to be watchful against first beginnings and to keep on the safe side of any doubtful line, yet I confidently appeal to your conscience to verify my statement that there is a *certain line* of all lines the most uncertain, but clear enough to each man, beyond which a man cannot go without mischief. The old Greeks were right when they preached that safety lay in the mean. In the mean! Familiar examples of old times I will not burden you with. How Heliogabalus devoured a plateful of nightingales' tongues. How Æsop, the comedian, entertained guests with a dish of talking parrots' tongues, which cost £56,000. Never mind; never mind! that is too far back in the past tense. We read of a millionaire who is guilty of the insane vagary of spending £2000 on the purchase of a single paving-stove for the side-walk in the front of his house. We read now and again of ball dresses that cost many hours of tedious toil, spoilt in one wearing. A magazine told us the other day of the fantastic folly of which the owners of pet dogs are capable. How the pampered beasts are fitted with robes, coats and gowns for morning wear, for afternoon wear, for evening wear; with yachting suits, travelling suits, visiting and bathing suits, suits for social functions. How they are served with pheasant and ptarmigan on silver dishes. The dear little things! It is very difficult to disguise disgust for such gross stupidity. It is not enough for us as citizens to smile at such things; we are bound to protest against them.

Let us see what can be said *for* luxuries—for wanton expenditure. The ordinary man in the London street says that luxuries are "*good for trade*." That is, that epicures and sybarites, libertines and wastrels are benefactors to society because they consume so much! There must be a lapse in the reasoning somewhere. Monsieur Laveleye in his bold and luminous monograph on the subject of luxury, tells of a young French economist who dined with his uncle. His host produced exquisite wine-glasses, and after dinner he smashed them saying, "Everyone must get a living somehow, you know." And the youngster thought that, on that principle, surely his uncle would confer a still greater benefit on society if he went on to destroy the crockery, furniture, and glass; for potters, carpenters and glaziers would be required to repair the damage. And on that line of reasoning, *Nero* who fired Rome, the *incendiaries* who wrecked Paris, the *cow* that kicked over the oil-lamp which set Chicago ablaze, were inspired by true economic principles. Nay, Sisyphus, who was condemned to use a sieve for a water-bucket in order that there might always be more work for him to do, was a model labourer! Surely the fallacy which nine-tenths still harbour in some section of the brain, the fallacy which underlies that is sufficiently apparent. "Good for trade!" The truth is, we see the workmen who replace the thing destroyed or consumed, but we do *not* see the other workmen who would have produced articles to be paid for by the money *thus* employed, if so much wealth had not been destroyed. But so much wealth has been consumed that these labourers cannot be put on. The otiose say that the luxury of the few benefits many. It is the old doctrine of Mandeville that "private vices are public benefits." So, the man who gets drunk at an alehouse confers a public benefit!

Oh! be sure of it, you do not benefit others by the service that others render to you; you benefit other people only by the service that you render to them.

"It circulates money." Nonsense. Money will always circulate in this age, unless you hang it up in a stocking or bury it in a hole. But those methods are clean gone out of fashion. You cannot keep money from circulating unless you do that.

"It keeps machinery going." Man did not come into this world to keep machinery going. Machinery has been called the "liberator of humanity." What is the use of machinery

unless it eases the severity of labour and increases the leisure time for the average man—the leisure needed to enjoy his home and cultivate high ends of life? John Stuart Mill said that the invention of modern machinery had not saved an hour's work to the labouring classes. I think that statement to be somewhat exaggerative, but if machinery does not do that, men become the slaves of a gigantic social engine of continually increasing momentum. What is the use of compulsorily educating the children of the nation, if, when they grow to manhood, they have no leisure to make use of their instruction?

Further, let us inquire why luxury is censurable and cursed by heaven's decree. It is the idle who debauch themselves with luxury. Usually the men who amass great fortunes are of simple even of austere life; those who have taken the trouble to be born their children and grown up with the idea that they were made of better clay than the rest of us, since it was mixed with gold dust, they who idly enjoy the ease which wealth has made possible are a different type. Where the child of a rich man is a good man, he merits praise for having sent the camel through the needle's eye. The taste for mere enjoyment materializes a man; it makes him sensual, cruel, frivolous, egoistic; for it draws him into the vortex of poor pursuits, even the pursuits of a savage without the excuses of a savage; it extinguishes the finer traits of character, it brutalizes the feelings and benumbs the conscince. Sometimes it leads to meanness. It is notorious that all the great charities of the country are supported by very few people, and so are largely dependant on legacies, which is in itself a very strong argument why hospitals (for example) should be publicly controlled and supported perforce *by all*, willing or unwilling, especially the unwilling! Society is so hard pressed to provide its own fashionable luxuries that there is no margin for benevolent purposes.

Whatever recreation equips you for your work is good. Whatever strengthens or refines your soul is defensible. Whatever renders you better able to bear the strain of work or to carry the burden of sorrow is good. But whatever narrows your sympathies; whatever feeds your vanity; whatever depletes your energies; whatever makes you cruel and selfish, is pernicious, more than I dare to say.

Again, luxury is pernicious to the body-politic. There is no instance of a nation which was given up to luxury maintaining or recovering the power which put luxury within its reach. For luxury kills the spirit of self-control and self-sacrifice, without which no society can exist. Of course I know very well that there is a very real and ever present danger of a luxurious people being over-run by a less enervated race, but, leaving that alone, *the luxury of the few engenders class bitterness.* The poor see the soft easy mode of life of the rich and the awful disparity of life at their end; they dimly discern that the toil wrung from the many provides for the luxury of the few, and "waste cries out for vengeance." The luxuries of a few are always at the expense of pauperism, or as the text puts it more forcibly, at the expense of the *slaughter* of the poor. Prodigality in one place means penury in another. As an Emperor of China said, "If one of my subjects be idle, somewhere in my state another of my subjects suffers from hunger and cold." If there were no luxury, there would be no poor. John Ruskin says, "Luxury at present can only be *enjoyed* by the ignorant; the *cruelest* man living could not sit at his feast unless he sat blindfold."

Christianity has always protested against luxury. In the first age its note was even *too* ascetic, too stern, too stringent against luxury; yes, because they thought that the end was near. But when the successors of the fishermen and tent-maker had conquered the world, they became infected with its spirit, and monasticism had to protest against their disloyalty. That is the justification of the monastic system. Every religious order that has sprung into existence has attempted to recover something of the simplicity of the first ages of our most holy faith. While that protest is being made in any age there is always hope; while there is a single ray of light there is not total eclipse.

It is a great joy and hope to me that to-day there are so many living protests against luxury in the hearts of the rich as well as on the lips of the poor. It is well for us to listen to the voice of religion which bids us curb our appetites and desires, to live plainly and think highly. But I do not look for amelioration in the adoption of Spartan or even Puritan methods of life. I quote, because I thoroughly endorse it, the

sentiment of Laveleye. "Perfection consists in the full development of a man's forces, intellectual and physical, and of his soul, of family affection, and of the love of humanity, and of the sense of the beautiful in nature and in art."

Richesse oblige. The rich man is the usufructuary, the life-trustee, the steward for the Lord of all the earth. A steward's first duty is to carry out what he knows to be the wishes of his lord. I do not say "all men are equal;" they are not. But all men are equally men; they are God's children, and God has no favourites, not even you. All men are equally men, and all material things are ordained for the supply of all human necessities. The only thing that is yours (strictly yours) is your body, mind and spirit. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof is His, for His children.

The wealth which is deaf to the appeals of suffering and to the higher needs of the world, bespeaks a frivolous, selfish, and cruel heart. The wealth that has no sense of its responsibility to the general welfare is *rank* to heaven. When I speak to you of wealthy people, I mean "wealthy" in comparison with those to whom this letter was written. And all of us are "wealthy" people! Every man is a "wealthy" man who has enough in hand for a month, for a week, for a day. The vast majority of men on the round world to-day are poor even on that showing.

We must train ourselves to learn the luxury of doing good, to find pleasure in such conduct as will make us more efficient members of the commonwealth. We have to realize the ideal which Christ preached; the ideal which much better than anywhere else is imaged in the Lord's Supper, the ideal of a true human brothernood.

We must *ethicize* and *spiritualize* our possessions. No man should seek more than he can really use, and rightly apply, more than he can properly carry. That is, so much as he can take into the service of his will and of his heart. There are many men who have enough to keep them to the Judgment Day, and yet they are slaving still, *because they cannot help it.* They have become addenda to their wealth. Instead of ruling, they are slaves. The French cynic spoke of one who was born a man and died a grocer! There are some men who are born men and become purses. From such an end may the good Lord deliver us!

A Noble Utterance.*

The appearance of Professor Carpenter's essay on "The Place of Immortality in Religious Belief" deserves to rank as one of the events of chief importance in the history of the Free Churches since the publication of Dr. Martineau's "Seat of Authority." It is a welcome proof of two things—first, that the capacity for the highest intellectual work still exists among us; and, secondly, that this power of intellect remains the instrument of a deep religious spirit. Such a question as that debated by Professor Carpenter requires for its proper treatment the highest gifts of mind; but all discussion of the matter is futile except spiritual insight be combined with the logic of the understanding. Both conditions are fulfilled in this book.

We do not hesitate to say that the discussion raised by Professor Carpenter is vastly more important to the Free Churches than any questions of church organization now occupying attention. The Gospel which, while preserving harmony with the conditions of free thought and a scientific age, should speak with conviction of Immortality, would soon dominate the religious world. This is a sphere in which the world at large eagerly desires a strong guidance, and where a strong guidance would be readily followed.

The essay, or discourse, does not pretend to be an exhaustive treatment; but it has the clear merit of suggestiveness, and that in no common measure. Professor Carpenter dismisses the attempt to prove Immortality by direct evidence. While not denying that the attempt might be made under more favourable conditions, and allowing that "psychical research" is a legitimate enquiry, the author very properly refuses to base his argument on any alleged facts of experience. The proof of immortality is indirect. It is an inference from our general faith in the moral order of the universe. Assuming that goodness is the dominating principle of the universe, it is hard to escape the conclusion that soul-life is perpetual. There are objections, but objections to which reasonable answers may be given. We are reduced to a choice between difficulties, and ultimately find it far easier to believe in the unbroken continuance of life than

* "The Place of Immortality in Religious Belief," by J. Estlin Carpenter, M, A.

to regard death as a final end. So believing, a whole series of bewildering facts fall into order—the problems suggested by sin, by interrupted development, by the spectacle of innumerable failures, by the presence in the world of millions for whom no chance is provided by the conditions of earth—receive an intelligible solution. Believing in immortality we find that all the facts of life fall into their due perspective, and the disorganized elements of experience combine into a united whole.

In his chapters on "The Demand for Retribution," "The Demand for Recompense," "The Victory of the Good," Professor Carpenter steadily maintains one attitude of mind; he conceives the conditions of the future life, not as forming parts of a different order of existence from the present, but as the natural continuance of present conditions, as the necessary consequences of causes now in operation. Limiting our view to the present life, we are everywhere confronted with unfulfilled issues; the fulfilment of those issues is what constitutes Retribution and Recompense, Hell and Heaven. The picture of a soul suddenly haled, at the moment of its departure, before the Heavenly judgment seat, and assigned a doom of bliss or woe according to the pleasure of the judge—this picture, which keeps still an obstinate hold on the human mind, naturally finds no place in Professor Carpenter's treatment of the question. The future is but the natural working out of causes set in operation during the present life. Death makes no break. The history of souls in that world and in this is one history: there, as here, sowing and reaping follow in the natural order.

Professor Carpenter writes with learning gathered from many fields. His view is coloured and strengthened by the culture both of the East and the West. He is thus enabled to elucidate his theme by the light of comparative judgment, and to illustrate it with many an apt and telling instance. But the quality which gives his essay its highest value is neither the learning which underlies the thought nor the clear and vigorous language in which it is couched. The author has a deep sense of the tragedy of human existence; he has seen and felt the eternal conflict at the heart of things, and in common with all genuinely illuminated minds he finds the world-tragedy an open door by which the soul may pass into the truth of God and Immortality. He writes with passionate solicitude for the sorrows of humanity; he sees the path of the world's progress strewn with the wreckage of innumerable souls, and with a true grasp of the situation he refuses to believe in a God who has no concern in *them*. Especially do we welcome the announcement of his faith that the sorrows of creation are also the sorrows of God; that the Deity is no spectator, but a participant to the full. On no other theory can the problem of evil be made intelligible or the hope of the future valid.

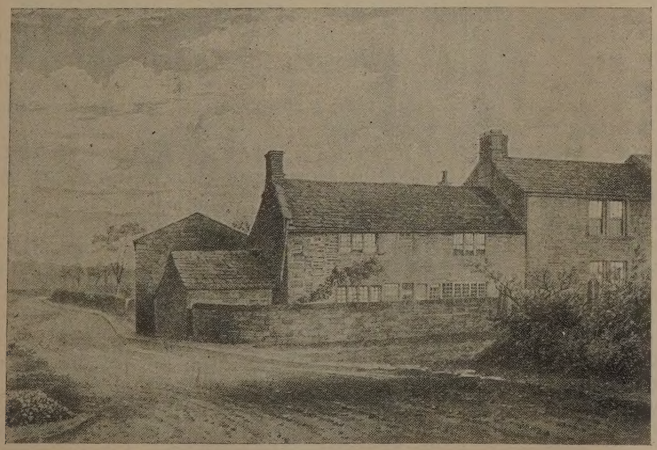
We wish it had been possible for Professor Carpenter to emphasize a slightly different aspect of the subject from any treated in this discourse. To us the question of Immortality is not a question of what *shall be*, but of what *is*. We wish he had made it a little clearer that the question of *another* world or *another* life is one with which religion and philosophy have nothing to do. What we have to determine is whether this life, here and now, is part and parcel of a life which has neither beginning nor end. At no future moment of our existence shall we have any better reason to believe ourselves immortal than we have now. If we existed a billion years, what better ground should we then have to expect the second billion than we now have to expect the first. Granted that Immortality is a fact, it is as much a fact now as ever it will be, and our assurance of it will never be greater than it now is. To be always living and always in doubt whether life will continue is not a pleasant prospect. Therefore it seems to us that the only satisfactory way to deal with the matter is to turn the question from the future to the present tense. Are we *here* and *now* at a certain stage in an existence which had no beginning and will have no end, eternal as that of God himself? It is a question not of divination but of psychology. For our part we lay equal emphasis on both parts of the statement—"no beginning" is to us as essential as "no end." In considering the nature of the soul, Time-orders count for nothing. Time was made for the soul (perhaps *by* it) and not the soul for Time. In that point of view backward and forward, past and present, may be reversed at will—they are equivalent terms. To make this clear should be the aim of the next essay on this great subject.

Authentic Interviews.

III.—DR. PRIESTLEY.

New York, June 18, 1794.

The latest refugee to this land of liberty is none other than the eminent Dr. Priestley. After a voyage of eight weeks he has reached these shores, and been welcomed by our foremost philosophers. The New York learned societies have already sent complimentary addresses, and to-morrow he proceeds to Philadelphia to receive yet further honour. But though his name is well known as the discoverer of oxygen, in addition to his philosophic fame, curiosity is rife as to the particulars of his life, and especially as to his reasons, supposed to be theological, for thus quitting his native soil. We are, therefore, gratified to be able to publish the following interesting facts, given in his own words, in answer to our questions.



DR. PRIESTLEY'S BIRTHPLACE, FIELDHEAD, NEAR LEEDS.

"You are a Yorkshireman, Dr. Priestley?"

"I was born at Fieldhead, about six miles south-west of Leeds; sent to several schools in the neighbourhood, and then left to conduct my studies as well as I could till I went to the Academy at Daventry, and was the first pupil that entered there."

"Was it there you first learned heresy?"

"The general plan of our studies was exceedingly favourable to free inquiry, as the students were about equally divided upon every question of much importance, such as Liberty and Necessity, and all the articles of theological orthodoxy and heresy. I saw reason to embrace what is generally called the heterodox side of almost every question. The extreme of heresy amongst us was Arianism. I was, before I went to the Academy, an Arminian, but had by no means rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, or that of the Atonement."

"When, then, did your theological trouble begin?"

"Before I went from home I was very desirous of being admitted a communicant in the congregation which I had always attended, but the elders of the church refused me, because when they interrogated me on the subject of the sin of Adam I appeared not to be quite orthodox."

"But your heresy did not keep you from the ministry?"

"I cheerfully listened to the first proposal that my tutor made to me, in consequence of an application made to him to provide a minister for the people of Needham Market, in Suffolk, though it was very remote from my friends in Yorkshire, and a very inconsiderable place. I found a small congregation, about an hundred people, and I flattered myself that I should be useful."

"And what hindered your expectation?"

"It was soon found that I was an Arian. From the time of this discovery my hearers fell off apace. I had, in consequence of much pains and thought, become persuaded of the falsity of the doctrine of atonement, of the

inspiration of the authors of the books of Scripture as writers, and of all idea of supernatural influence, except for the purpose of miracles."

"So you had to quit. Where was your next settlement?"

"At Nantwich, in Cheshire. Gladly accepting the invitation, I removed from Needham, going thence to London by sea to save expense. This was in 1758, after having been at Needham just three years. At Nantwich I found a good-natured, friendly people, with whom I lived three years very happily. I was soon able to establish a school, to which I gave almost my whole attention, and in which I found the greatest satisfaction. My school soon enabled me to purchase a few books, and some philosophical instruments, as a small air-pump, an electrical machine, etc."

"From this time, presumably, natural philosophy began to compete with theology. Was this why you left Nantwich?"

"The Academy at Warrington was instituted when I was at Needham. On the death of Dr. Taylor, and the advancement of Mr. Aikin, I was invited to succeed him as tutor in the languages. This I accepted, but I should have preferred the office of teaching the mathematics and natural philosophy."

"How long did you remain at Warrington?"

"In this new situation I continued six years. Though I had no particular fondness for the studies relating to my profession then, I applied myself to them with great assiduity. With a view to lead the students to a facility in writing English, I encouraged them to write in verse, and Mrs. Barbauld told me that it was the perusal of some verses of mine that first induced her to write anything in verse. Several of her first poems were written in my house."

"But you found time to pursue your experiments, perhaps?"

"Going to London, and being introduced to Dr. Price and Dr. Franklin, I was led to attend to the subject of experimental philosophy more than I had done before. I mentioned to Dr. Franklin an idea that had occurred to me of writing the history of discoveries in electricity. This led me by degrees into a large field of original experiments."

"What induced you to return to the ministry?"

"I always considered the office of a Christian minister as the most honourable of any upon earth. Though, while at Warrington, it was no part of my duty to preach, I had, from choice, continued the practice, and wishing to keep up the character of a Dissenting minister, I chose to be ordained while I was there. I was there six years, most laboriously employed, for nothing more than a bare subsistence. I therefore listened to an invitation to take charge of the congregation of Mill Hill Chapel, at Leeds, where I was pretty well known, and thither I removed in September, 1767. At Leeds I continued six years, very happy, with a liberal, friendly, and harmonious congregation."

"And what of your studies, Dr. Priestley?"

"I naturally resumed my application to speculative theology, which had occupied me at Needham, and which had been interrupted by the business of teaching at Nantwich and Warrington. By reading with care Dr. Lardner's "Letter on the Logos," I became what is called a Socinian, and have seen more and more reason to be satisfied with that opinion."

"Such an opinion, doubtless, had its disadvantages?"

"While I was at Leeds, a proposal was made to me to accompany Captain Cook in his second voyage to the South Seas. As the terms were very advantageous, I consented to it, and the heads of my congregation had agreed to keep an assistant to supply my place during my absence. But I was objected to by some clergymen in the Board of Longitude on account of my religious principles."

"But you had some good friends, it is to be hoped?"

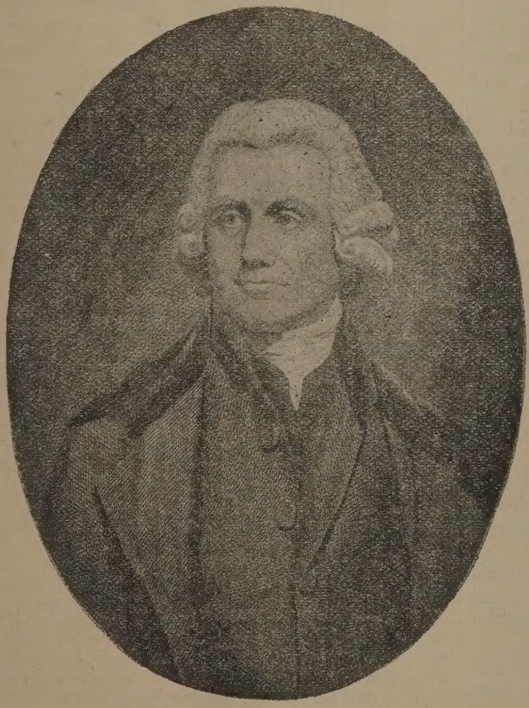
"I was particularly happy in my intercourse with Mr. Turner, of Wakefield, and occasionally with Mr. Cappe, of York. And here it was that I first met Mr. Lindsey, then of Catterick, and a correspondence and intimacy commenced which has been the source of more real satisfaction to me than any other circumstance in my whole life. At Leeds began my intercourse with Mr. Lee, of Lincoln's Inn, who was a native of the place, and also my particular friendship for Dr. Price."

"What was the cause of your leaving Leeds?"

"Though I was very happy there I was tempted to leave it to go into the family of

the Earl of Shelburne. I had been recommended to him by Dr. Price, as a person qualified to be a literary companion to him. My office was nominally that of librarian. Reflecting on the time that I spent with Lord Shelburne, being as a guest in the family, I can truly say that I was not at all fascinated with that mode of life."

"But you would see more of your London friends?"



DR. PRIESTLEY (*from the Painting by Opie*).

"Spending so much of my time in London was the means of increasing my intimacy with both Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Lee, our common friend, who, amidst the bustle of politics, always preserved his attachment to theology and the cause of truth. The Sunday I always spent with Mr. Lindsey, attending the service of his chapel and sometimes officiating for him. My winter's residence in London was also the means of improving my acquaintance with Dr. Franklin."

"Your next settlement, then, was at Birmingham, from which you were shamefully driven without cause or warning. What was the alleged reason?"

"About two years before I left Birmingham the question about the Test Act was much agitated both in and out of Parliament. I only delivered and published a sermon on the 5th November, 1789, recommending the most peaceful method of pursuing our object. I was far from expecting any serious consequences, but, it being imagined, though without any reason, that I had been the chief promoter of the measures which gave them offence, the clergy, not only in Birmingham, but through all England, seemed to make it their business to inflame the minds of the people against me. And on occasion of the celebration of the Anniversary of the French Revolution, on July 14th, 1791, with which I had little to do, a mob, encouraged by some persons in power, first burned the Meeting House in which I preached, then another Meeting House in the town, and then my dwelling-house, demolishing my library, apparatus, and, as far as they could, everything belonging to me. They also burned, or much damaged, the houses of many Dissenters, chiefly my friends."

"Where did you find refuge?"

"Being in some personal danger I went to London, though there I continued to be an object of troublesome attention. It showed no small degree of courage in Dr. Price's congregation to invite me to succeed him at Hackney, though not unanimously. I found, however, my society much restricted with respect to my philosophical acquaintance, most of the members of the Royal Society shunning me on account of my religious or political opinions."

"No wonder you felt the injustice of such ungrateful prejudice, and thought of more hospitable shores!"

"The bigotry of the country in general made it impossible for me to place my sons in it to any

advantage. My own situation, if not hazardous, was become unpleasant, so that I thought that my removal would be of more service to the cause of truth than my longer stay in England."

"And so you resolved to turn your back on England for ever, and come over to America—though not as a stranger?"

"At length, therefore, with the approbation of all my friends, without exception, but with great reluctance on my own part, I came to that resolution."

A prophet hath no honour in his own country, truly, but, instead, a reward of hatred and calumny. In England they do not stone their prophets, but burn their houses, and cut their acquaintance. Dr. Priestley has deserved better of his country than it of him. But it shall learn to do him justice in time, and the world will treasure his name. Whether in Science, which he has so enriched, or in Theology, which he seems to love most, in Liberty, for which he has pleaded, or in Righteousness, for which he has been persecuted, he has proved himself a discoverer, a truth seeker, a philanthropist, a reformer, and is entitled, not to opprobrium, but to admiration and honour. We are sure that these will be accorded him in the land of his adoption.

Witty Historical Sayings.

1. "Though the gentlemen shot well with yew bows, the ladies shot better with beaux yeux;" so said Murray Wilkins at an archery meeting.

2. "Lord Anson has been round the world but never in it," was the comment of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams upon Lord Anson's want of knowledge of the world.

3. A rich tobacconist asked Curran to supply him with a motto for his carriage. Curran suggested "Quid rides."

4. "And we call everybody military who is not civil," was Talleyrand's answer to an officer who had been rude to him.

5. Colman, when asked if he knew Theodore Hook, replied, "Oh, yes, Hook and I (eye) are old associates."

6. A friend of Curran's, hearing some one say *curosity* for curiosity, exclaimed, "How that fellow does murder the English language!"

"Not so bad as that," replied Curran; "he has only knocked an 'i' (eye) out."

7. "Peccavi" (I have Scinde) was given by "Punch" as Sir Charles Napier's despatch from India.

8. Upon the death of Mary, the termagant wife of Archbishop Dawes, some one observed that she had become "Mare pacificum."

"Ah," was the reply, "but not until she become 'Mare mortuum.'"

To Spring.

A SICK GIRL'S INVOCATION.

Come forth, most beauteous Maid,
Nor let me yearn in vain;
I am so young to droop and fade,
Oh, lead me from this bed of pain.
Bear me to sunny bowers
Where happy song-birds sing;
Crown me with fresh young leaves and flowers,
And I will bless thee, lovely Spring,

O form of beauty, stand
Beside my little bed;
Hang round my neck with thy fair hand
A chain of daisies, white and red.
From these poor fevered lips
The bitter draught, oh, fling!
I'll drink the dew the wild-rose sips,
From thy bright goblet, generous Spring.

For that blest draught, I know,
Hath caught its changeful hue
From hawthorn buds that sweetly blow,
Fair cowslip bells, and violets blue.
It thrills poor drooping hearts,
And bids slow pulses sing;
To fainting souls new life imparts.
Come, let me drink, thou balmy Spring.

When merry sunbeams play
Upon these cheerless walls,
I hear in valleys far away
The tinkling of the waterfalls.
I hear once more the lark,
And see his fluttering wing;
Then search all vainly in the dark
For thy dear blossoms, bounteous Spring.

Though wagons, all day long,
Go rumbling down the street,
I hear the distant river's song,
I hear the merry lambkins bleat.
A happy child once more,
In leafy boughs I swing.
Ah, life is sweet, and pain is o'er;
Thy breath doth heal me, heavenly Spring.

FANNY FORRESTER.

"Two Opposing Tendencies." *

We continue to be bombarded with letters and articles on this hotly-disputed subject. We have given it more than enough space in our columns, and we must ask our contributors to remember that for the most part our columns are wanted for matter of quite another kind. The extracts we give below from thoughtful papers, by the Revs. E. Solly Anthony and A. W. Timmis, must conclude this controversy, as far as the *Seed Sower* is concerned. Mr. Anthony, in an article on "The Liberal Christian Church," in which he advocates that name for our churches as a whole, writes :—

"For my own part, I am quite content with the name Unitarian, and have no wish to give it up, but while those who cling to the name do so simply as a *preference*, those who are opposed to it take that position as a matter of *principle*, and surely where a principle is concerned, a preference must give way. Now there is a real objection to applying the name Unitarian to the old chapels which were built by Trinitarians, because it involves a violation of historical continuity. The original founders were not Unitarians and never intended the buildings to be used for Unitarian purposes, but the present occupants are their legitimate spiritual descendants. In such a case, historical continuity demands a name which while suitable to the present circumstances would have been equally appropriate in the old days. There are various ways of securing this.

Now, I think that as a rule the advocates of the Unitarian name are not strictly logical, and they fail to see the theoretical objections to labelling a church by a doctrinal name. But, on the other hand, they are not the narrow sectarians which their opponents would make them out to be. They are rather practical, common sense folk who argue thus: If we are Unitarians, why should we not say so? Why should we not let people know what we are? If we put up the name Unitarian on our notice boards, it is simply because we wish to inform the public that here is a Church where Unitarians can conscientiously worship. Unitarians are excluded from other Churches on account of their theological opinions; we wish to let them know that here is a Church to which they will be welcomed. We do not mean by it that others will be excluded or are not wanted. In a speech on the Chinese question, Lord Kimberley said, 'We do not want exclusive privileges, but we do not want to be excluded. We want nothing for ourselves that we are not willing to see given on the same terms to all the world.' This exactly expresses the principle of our denomination. We uphold the policy of the open door. And this is the important thing, to maintain the open door, whatever name we take. Where the name Unitarian is adopted, it is not to be regarded as a creed. It has been well pointed out that 'the name of a building, even if printed on a board or inscribed upon a stone, is not an instrument declaring a trust, but simply a piece of current information. And whatever theoretical accuracy may demand, in popular usage a place where Unitarians worship will always be regarded as a Unitarian Church.

Some people seek to escape from the difficulty caused by denominational names, by the process of emptying the name of its real meaning and employing it in some new sense of their own. This is rather like the plan of Humpty Dumpty in 'Through the Looking Glass,' but it cannot be recommended for general use, or it would cause no end of confusion. 'When I use a word,' said Humpty Dumpty, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less.' So there are some of our people who cling to the old name Presbyterian, simply as meaning non-dogmatic, not that they are really Presbyterians.

Now, I claim to be a Presbyterian in reality, and I think I have a right to the name if I cared to use it, because I was ordained by a Presbytery, and I believe in the Presbyterian form of church government. On the other hand, there are some who cling to the name Unitarian, and likewise empty it of its real significance. They talk about the 'larger meaning of Unitarianism,' which they interpret as equivalent to freedom of thought. But this seems to me to be a misuse of words. The name Unitarian has a definite theological meaning, and the only sense in which it can be applied to our churches, is as indicating the present opinions of the members of our congregations. It does not, of course, mean that the churches are tied up to maintain these doctrines for ever. If by a Unitarian Church is meant one which is bound by a doctrinal trust-deed, then, I am thankful to say, there are very few of such places. No one among us now-a-days wishes for such creed-bound churches. Whether we take the name Unitarian or not, we all approve of the principle of the open trust. And further, whether we approve of a doctrinal name or not, we all agree that religion should come before doctrine, and that character is of more importance than creed.

But the name Unitarian does not necessarily indicate a fighting attitude, as Mr. Fripp imagines. It is not to be interpreted as equivalent to Anti-Trinitarian, but simply as Non-Trinitarian. The business of a Unitarian Church is not to be perpetually attacking the doctrine of the Trinity, but rather to uphold the Unity of God and simply ignore the Trinity.

Mr. Fripp entitles his papers 'Two Opposing Tendencies—a consideration of the conflicting and mutually exclusive influences at present at work in our churches'—but I believe the two tendencies are not so entirely irreconcilable as he supposes. The fact is that our denomination is really a blend of two streams. There is the old liberal Presbyterian Nonconformity, with its open trusts and comparative indifference to theology, and there is the Unitarian movement, with a zeal for doctrinal propagandism, introduced by Priestley and Lindsey.

* We owe Mr. Cogan Conway an apology for a printers' error which disfigured his article on this subject in the March *Seed Sower*. An Editorial note, which should have been placed as a footnote at the bottom of the page, was, unfortunately, incorporated with his own remarks. The words in question occur towards the end of column 1, page 10, and begin as follows :—"Nevertheless the Editors have very grave doubts," etc.

Both of these tendencies have influenced us, and we value them both. But they are not diametrically opposed to each other, and the progress of our church is the resultant of these two forces."

Mr. Timmis, in an article on "The Founders of our Churches," writes :—

"'The founders of our Churches,' says Mr. Fripp, in the *Seed Sower* for last December, 'were men who left, or stood apart from, the Established Church in the latter half of the seventeenth century, many of them resigning their livings or hopes of preferment in consequence of the Act of Uniformity in 1662.' He declares that they did so "because they felt the Creeds to be impediment to religion, yes, to *Religion*.' And for the same reason we are told, "they founded their churches on the free-trust.' Sick of theological controversy, they said, 'Let us have churches free from doctrinal limitations, and therefore free to do the work of the Gospel. Let us dedicate them simply to the worship and service of God. Let worship and service, not doctrine, be their distinguishing sign.'

Now, what are Mr. Fripp's sources of information concerning the principles and ideals of our pious founders *in the 17th Century?* None, I fear, more reliable than his memory of statements which he had accepted at second-hand without taking the trouble to enquire whether they were correct. Proof Mr. Fripp appears not to have asked for yet; and thus he keeps his youthful faith in those mythical 'founders of our churches' whose principles he has expounded in such glowing terms. If he can prove me to be in the wrong, I will gladly eat humble pie, and say a hearty grace after meat; but I have no hope of such a result from this challenge.

The style of the prophet, speaking 'with authority' is very well sometimes. When, however, it is a question of historical fact, the scribe's method of appeal to documents and testimony is better. And in this case no laborious research was necessary. A little reading of such popular books as Green's 'Short History,' or Hunt's 'Religious Thought in England,' might have sufficed to curb Mr. Fripp's unbridled 'license of affirmation.' It is simply not a fact that the Nonconformists of 1662 submitted to expulsion from the Established Church 'because they felt the creeds to be an impediment to religion.' At the Savoy Conference, where Baxter was one of their spokesmen, they had a fine opportunity to protest against the creeds of the Church had they been so minded; but they did not protest. 'They took it for granted,' they said, 'that on doctrine all parties were agreed. Their only difference concerned Church government and some particulars about the service and ceremonies.'—(Hunt, vol. i., p. 279.) Some of their suggested alterations of the Prayer Book tended towards increased strictness and narrowness. They urged, for example, the scruples felt by learned and pious men to baptise the children of unbelievers. They objected to the use of the words 'in sure and certain hope' at the burial of a person who had lived and died 'in open and notorious sins.' These criticisms of Church usage may be logical, but they do not indicate any exceptional liberality of sentiment in the men who offered them.

Was there *one* of the ministers ejected in 1662 who had attained to that persuasion of the relative unimportance of creeds and confessions with which Mr. Fripp credits the founders of our churches? Even Richard Baxter was not so liberal and catholic as Mr. Fripp. While there are sayings of Baxter's that point in the right direction, the extent of his liberalism has been much exaggerated. Recently I read, in his 'Narrative of his own Life,' the passage which the late Dean Stanley earnestly advised everybody to read The impression it made was disappointing. The genial dean found in it 'the acknowledgment that goodness, and goodness alone, whether amongst heathens or Christians, is the sole and efficient condition of salvation.' Baxter does not say so. He says he is not so sure as he used to be that the heathen who never heard of Christ cannot be saved by God's grace; and that he is sure 'the ungodly among us Christians are in a far worse case than they.' He also says—but with special reference to Roman Catholics—'I can never believe that a man may not be saved by that religion which doth but bring him to the true love of God and to a heavenly mind and life.' Again, he does not advocate unlimited toleration. He would have only those churches tolerated by the State 'who profess all that is in' the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue. And his answer to the objection that Papists and Socinians might claim toleration on this condition—'so much the better, and so much the fitter it is to be the matter of our concord.'—ought not to be quoted without mention of the fact that Baxter to the end of his life opposed toleration of Papists and Socinians. Perhaps it is not among Protestant Nonconformists, but among the 'latitude men' in the Established Church, that we must look for the ripest and sweetest religious liberalism of that age.

Of the ejected ministers of 1662, if Richard Baxter will not serve Mr. Fripp's purpose, I am afraid that no one else will. Under the Commonwealth and just before that period the Presbyterians were distinguished from the Independents by their intolerance. It was by the Presbyterian vote in the House of Commons, in 1648, that persistent denial of the Trinity was made a crime punishable with death. During the quarter of a century between the Act of Uniformity and the Toleration Act, English Presbyterians doubtless acquired, in suffering persecution, a healthy distaste for inflicting it. Yet, I think it would puzzle Mr. Fripp to name a single Presbyterian, or other Protestant Dissenter, who 'in the latter half of the 17th century"—or, as he puts it in his third paper, 'at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century—professed the principles which he says were then characteristic of the founders of our churches.

I cordially share Mr. Fripp's objection to having our places of worship or our congregations labelled *Unitarian*, but prefer to rest the case on fact instead of fiction.

Let that for which the Presbyterian name stands—the principle of open Christian fellowship, with no bar of a dogmatic name across the entrance, and the kindred principle of freedom and progress in religious thought—be defended, as it can well be, without distortion or suppression of historical fact. Reverence for our ancestors, if they are worthy of it, is seemly and wholesome, but is not best shown by misrepresenting their ideas and convictions.

Congregational Singing.

II.

The office of the organ, therefore, is to accompany the voices of the congregation; the result can never be good when it steps into the place of a leader. But if not the organ, who or what shall lead the congregation? The organ and its feeble parody, the harmonium, are now so much in fashion that it is almost hopeless to plead for any other kind of instrument. The village band is all but extinct; in a few years it will be completely gone, and people associate with it nothing but ridicule and contempt. I do not advocate the revival of the clarionet, serpent, bass-viol, and the rest, played as they usually were; but a quartet of stringed instruments playing the four parts which the voices sing, would be not unsuited for the work. These instruments are more like the voice than any others; they are capable of giving accent and of playing with lightness of tone; they are unable to drown the voices of the congregation, and would certainly blend most harmoniously with them. The same may be said of brass instruments (cornet, alto and tenor bugles, and bombardon), which would render a most powerful and yet sympathetic support to the voices Whichever class of instruments were used, the number engaged on each part could be indefinitely increased to suit the size of the congregation. The idea that there is anything more "secular" in playing a fiddle or a cornet in church than in playing an organ is purely conventional, as a moment's reflection will show. What work on earth is more unmitigated drudgery than organ-blowing? But passing from the strings and the brass, and allowing the organ to accompany or not, shall we be led by one or more professional singers, or by a good-sized choir? I am for the choir, as more likely to encourage the general singing of the congregation. I would teach the choir to consider themselves as part of the congregation, and not in any sense as deputy praisers for the rest of the people. Supposing such a choir to be formed in a church where an organ is employed, the task will be to maintain the authority of the voices over the instrument. A large choir directed by a choirmaster who is determined to keep the music within reach of the congregation, will be generally in accordance with the interests of the body of worshippers. The choirmaster should, therefore, be the chief musical authority in the church. It is the custom in the Church of England, when there is a choirmaster as well as an organist, to leave the whole musical arrangements with the choirmaster. He chooses all the tunes and drills the singers, while the organist has only to play what is put into his hands. This is the arrangement which should be adopted in our churches. It would of necessity bring about a more general service of praise, for the convenience of the voices would be put before that of the organist. A great deal might at once be done to improve the quality of our congregational singing, in whatever way the musical strength of a church is organised, whether by a precentor, choir, or a few leading singers. The idea that one hymn ought to be sung more loudly or more softly than another, or that any lines or verses need changing expression, seems never to occur to nine out of ten of these praise leaders. The organists do observe it, by turning on stops or turning them off, but it is the voices of the congregation that should do so. Organ pipes, whether they thunder or whisper, can never do duty for men and women. It is a burst of vocal sound we should hear when an inspiring thought is reached; it is human voices that should utter in bated breath a confession of sin or a plea for mercy. Still less heard of is the doctrine that the speed of movement should vary with the character of the hymn, while there are hardly any churches where an attempt is made at what musicians call "phrasing," that is, at observing the elocutional pauses in the words. And be it remembered these are not mere refinements to please the fastidious tastes of the musician. The effect of them all is to throw life into the words, and compel attention to the spirit and meaning of the hymn. What higher service can music be called upon to render?

Is not this its complete apology for entering the house of God? I need not give an example of the way in which a change of sentiment in a hymn, accompanied by a change in the musical emphasis (by the voices of the people, not by the organ pipes) leaves an impression upon the heart of every worshipper. Nor need I show how we should sing hymns of bounding Christian joy faster than reflective and introspective hymns. A

word may, however, be spent on "phrasing," considering what a rare performance it seems to be. Everyone knows that a good reader, in reciting the following lines, would pause between each attribute of God. With this we may contrast the usual style of singing the two lines, supposing the tune to be, as it generally is, *Houghton* :—

Phrasing.	*No phrasing.*
Our Maker, defender,	Our maker de, fender re,
Redeemer, and friend.	Deemer and, friend.

Or to take another example :—

Phrasing.
O God !.....Thy power is wonderful.
No phrasing.
O God Thy power.....is wonderful.

In neither case need I ask which rendering is more likely to make the congregation reflect on the meaning of the words. This observance of elocutional pauses is not naturally given to a congregation. People observe by instinct the musical phrases, and take breath between them. But in singing several verses to one tune the verbal phrases must of necessity cross and contradict the musical. Then the music has always to give way to the words. Still it is astonishing how soon the habits may be formed of marking these verbal breaks. The organists can, in this matter, come speedily to our relief. If they will raise their hands from the manuals at the pauses the people will at once begin to phrase. The organist of a Church of England whom I know has carried out this practice for some time. He was once conversing on the subject with a poor illiterate woman who attends the church. She said "It helps to make the meaning clear, sir." Where could he have got a better testimony to the real excellency of the plan? The elocutional pauses are the Alpha and Omega of chanting, but in how few places are they observed.

Let us take an example :—

Elocutional rendering.—Trust in the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, upon the Lord.

As usually performed.—Trust-in-the-Lord-be of good-courage, and-He—sha—a—a—a—a—ll strengthen thine heart; wait-I — — — say upon the Lord.

The prevailing rule for delivering the reciting tone is, "Get through it helter-skelter, as fast as you can, and then wait for your neighbours." And while the Cathedrals and established churches set such a bad example, Nonconformists are not likely to improve. In all this high region of emotional expression in psalmody, the minister, whether a musical man or not, possesses great power. I have not been able to understand why the custom of reading out all or any part of a hymn should have survived the general possession of hymn-books by the congregation. I have often wondered whether the custom was even of use to our forefathers, who had no hymn-books; whether, in fact, they could hold four or eight lines of a hymn in memory from hearing them once read over. Now, at any rate, the custom is useless. To some people it is worse than usual, for they find that if they have uttered in silence the prayer and praise of the verse which the minister has read, it is difficult immediately after to trace their way through precisely the same series of emotions when they are singing. He has taken the edge off their power of absorbing the thoughts of the poet. The time which is now occupied in giving out the hymn may, however, be very profitably spent by the minister in speaking of its character, and endeavouring, by a few well-chosen words, to lift the congregation to its exalted level. A remark may be offered on the kind of tunes fit to be sung in Congregational Churches. There is a severe school of church music that asserts itself now-a-days with some strength. It is the old, old story of the dead ruling the living. The only test that can rightly be applied to a tune is —does it call out the feelings and sympathies of the worshippers, accord with the spirit of the words to which it is set, and help to drive home their meaning? Whereas some people seem to think that our duty is to sing what was sung in Reformation times, and ask no questions. In obedience to this notion the tunes are to have but one note to every syllable of the hymn. Now, if tunes are judged by the degree in which they impress the hymn upon the minds of the worshippers, it will be found, no doubt, that those which render the most true and lasting service are of a sober kind. But why should not these occasionally be mixed with lighter tunes, such as have been introduced with so much success by the Ritualists? Tunes with a lively melody, containing plenty of sequence and reply, and with some rhythm, exactly hit the average English ear, and are sung

with heartiness, and thoroughly enjoyed. Such tunes, it may be objected, are ephemeral, and are soon laid aside. Certainly they are, but is this any reason why they should not be used as long as they will serve to call out the hearts and voices of the worshippers?

The Roman Church gains much artistically and æsthetically by its centralisation. The pure taste of the best men in music and in art, influences and directs the usages of all the churches, those in rural and uncouth places, as well as those in cities. It is, on the other hand, said of our Free Churches that they are "religious republics." Not satisfied with that, however, they are republics in matters of taste and in all modes of ordering their service. Those who hold the reins in the musical department have generally no traditions of wiser men than themselves to maintain; they consult only their often erratic fancy; they hardly ever hear the services in other places than their own, and where they do they are often too wedded to the ruts and mannerisms of years to get any profit. But surely our liberty need not thus be abused. Even in matters of taste it has its advantages, for each congregation can mould the musical arrangements of the services to its own likings and capabilities. Musical knowledge is spreading fast through the community. and choral singing is becoming more common. Let the musical people in our congregations, who spend so much time in practice and performance, be anxious above all things to give their best to God.

The Seed Sower;

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE,
FOR THE HOME, THE SCHOOL, AND THE CHURCH.

Localised by Essex Church, London; All Souls, Belfast; Unity Church, London; Great Meeting, Leicester; The Western Union (all the churches); Kidderminster; Whitchurch; Hurst Street Mission, Birmingham; and other places.

By post, 1/6 per annum.
Special terms for churches taking 50 copies and above.

All business communications to be addressed to—
MR. ARNOLD WOOD,
35, Paradise Street, Birmingham.

Seed Corn.

The writer of Ecclesiasticus tells us that the glory of the artizans, the labourers, ploughmen, potters, jewellers, smiths, the great army of humble toilers, is to "maintain the fabric of the world." But how grand a mission is that! More necessary than men of genius — poets, painters, statesmen — are the men on whose labours the whole fabric of society is built up.

There is as much electricity in a dew-drop, holding its particles together, as in a flash of lightning. And as much greatness of soul may go into some obscure fidelity as into a deed that strikes all the world with wonder.

When we complain of the obscurity of our lot it comforts and greatens us to remember that we are one with the vast majority of mankind. For that which makes us one with all men—the common affections, passions, instincts, hopes, powers—is far more precious than those peculiar gifts which set us apart from the rest of men. There is something grand in being one with the great heart and life of humanity.

What is wanted for the revival of religion is not a new supply of men of genius, but a larger supply of plain, honest men and women, who shall follow Christ in "the trivial round and common task," who shall pay their debts, and keep their own door-step clean, and bring up their children in love and unselfishness, and be loyal to conscience in little things, and kindly to their neighbour's always,

---

Acts are great not according to the splendour of their consequences, but according to the difficulties in doing them.

The greatest affair in life is the creation of character, and this can be accomplished as well in a cottage as in a palace. It was in a very humble home that Jesus grew into "the chief among ten thousand."

A man cannot talk much about himself without embellishing his subject. He adorns himself with exaggerated vices and virtues. From being a bore he becomes a liar.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Kittens' Christmas.

By E. M. Saunders.

One Christmas eve three kittens felt
Their griefs were very many:
They couldn't hang their stockings up
Because they hadn't any.

"What shall we do?" these kittens cried,
They looked at one another;
And then the wisest of them said,
"We'll go and ask our mother."

Old mother Tabby gently purred:
"You foolish little kittens!
Although you have no stockings, dears,
Why not hang up your mittens?"

So, when these kittens went to bed,
Their hearts were free from sorrow:
They wondered what good Santa Claus
Would bring them for the morrow.

Then quietly old Tabby came,
On soft paws gently creeping,
And filled their mittens brimming full,
While they were sweetly sleeping.

The kittens woke, and rubbed their eyes,
Just as the day was dawning;
And very merry were they all
On that bright Christmas morning.

They found three balls, some chocolate mice
Three pretty bright gold fishes;
And best of all, upon the hearth,
Fresh cream in little dishes.

The Boy and the Sparrow.

Once a sweet boy sat and swung on a limb:
On the ground stood a sparrow-bird, looking at him;
Now the boy he was good, but the sparrow was bad,
So it shied a big stone at the head of the lad,
And it killed the poor boy; and the sparrow was glad.

Then the little boy's mother flew over the trees,
"Tell me, where is my little boy, sparrow-bird, please?"
"He is safe in my pocket," the sparrow-bird said;
And another stone shied at the fond mother's head,
And she fell at the feet of the wicked bird, dead.

You imagine, no doubt, that the tale I have mixed;
But it wasn't by me that the story was fixed.
'Twas a dream a boy had after killing a bird;
And he dreamed it so loud that I heard every word,
And I jotted it down as it really occurred.—*Good Words.*

The Key to the Box.

"What would you do," said the little key
To the teak-wood box, "except for me?"

The teak-wood box gave a gentle creak
To the little key, but it did not speak.

"I believe," said the key, "that I will hide
In the crack down there by the chimney side."

"Just so this proud old box may see
How little it's worth except for me."

It was long, long afterward, in the crack
They found the key, and they brought it back;

And it said, as it chuckled and laughed to itself,
"Now I'll be good to the box on the shelf."

But the little key stopped with a shiver and shock,
For there was a bright new key in the lock.

And the old lock said, "I am sorry, you see;
But the place is filled, my poor little key."
—*St. Nicholas.*

Topsy-Turvy.

This it is that puzzles me,—
How the little Japanee,
'Way beyond the great salt sea,
In the land of silk and tea,
Is just opposite to me!
Both are standing on the ground,
And the earth between is round!

O, I cannot help but frown;
For, *perhaps*, I'm upside down,
And our peaceful little town
And its church and steeple brown
Also are all upside down!

No, I will not think 'tis I
Who am hanging in the sky:
I much rather think 'tis he,
The funny little Japanee!

Three rabbits found a turnip
All on a winter's day.
"It's mine!" cried One. "No, mine!" said Two.
Said Three, "It isn't for either of you:
It's clearly mine, I say!"

Then they quarrelled, oh, so sadly,
All on a winter's day!
And as they fought a pig passed by,
Gazed at the turnip greedily,
And ate it up straightway